



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF: Executive Member for Children's Services

LEAD OFFICER: Director of Children's Services

DATE: 11th January 2018

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Children's Services

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT: Fostering Service Quarterly Report – 1 July 2017 – 30 September 2017

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide information on the management and performance of the Local Authority's Fostering Service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

Notes this quarterly report which is available on the Council website.

3. BACKGROUND

The Fostering Service Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services requires the Council Executive to:

- a) Receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the Fostering Service every 3 months;
- b) Monitor the management and outcomes of the services in order to satisfy themselves that the Service is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children; and
- c) Satisfy themselves that the provider is complying with the conditions of registration.

The report has been written to address the issues identified above. It will be taken into account by OFSTED in inspecting the Service.

This report is for the second quarter of 2017- 2018, covering the period from 1st July to 30th September 2017, and provides an overview of the Service.

4. KEY ISSUES

1. The overall number of foster carers has reduced, including a decline in the number of mainstream foster carers. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Courts are prioritising placements with family and friends which has placed the service under pressure to undertake a significantly increased number of full Family and Friends assessments within tight timescales.
 - A large number of Family and Friends assessments have led to the making of Special Guardianship Orders.
 - The challenge of recruiting mainstream carers for specific groups of children and young people is replicated across the region.
 - Lack of capacity in the Fostering Service to complete mainstream foster carer assessments in addition to the large number of Family and Friends assessments.
 - Delay in the new Recruitment and Marketing Officer starting in post.
2. An increase in the number of children coming into care has placed pressure on fostering and residential placements across the region, and consequently the commissioning budget; however, the Fostering Service is operating within budget.
3. There has been a slight dip in performance relating to placement stability though the borough remains better than the national average.
4. An increase in the number of commissioned placements as a result of increased numbers of children coming into care and reduction in the number of foster carers. This has led to an increase of 10 commissioned placements this Quarter when 7 independent fostering placements and 3 agency residential placements were made.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

No policy implications identified.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications identified.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

This report is required to meet statutory requirements as set out in the 'National Minimum Standards for Fostering'

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

No resource implications identified.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

10. CONSULTATIONS

None.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	V2.0
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Alyson Hanson – Service Leader, Placement Services
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DATE:	22 nd November 2017
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Fostering Service Quarter 2 Report – 1 July 2017 – 30 September 2017
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